

# Belgrade Begins Crackdown on Croat Nationalism

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**BELGRADE** — Political trials and a clash between infiltrators and government forces are setting the backdrop this summer for a general ideological tightening up in Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav federal Ministry of the Interior Monday added some new information to the unfolding story of an abortive, Balkan mini-"Bay of Pigs" invasion by trained Croatian terrorists.

In its first announcement since a July 3 statement saying that a group of terrorist

intruders had been "destroyed" in Bosnia, the government said the group consisted of 19 "known Ustashi terrorists and criminals," of whom 17 were killed and two escaped. At first, the ministry announced that only six were killed outright in the incident.

A further announcement on Wednesday said that 13 Yugoslav soldiers and militiamen were killed in the fighting with the infiltrators in the mountains of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the dead on the government side was an army captain.

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug also said that one of the two infiltrators who had initially escaped was killed, raising the announced deaths on both sides to 31.

The Ustashi have a long and sinister history in Yugoslavia. They were founded in 1929 to fight for Croatian independence, and elements of the group still exist abroad. During World War II, the Ustashi sided with the Axis and administered a native fascist puppet state. The flurry of Ustashi activity coincides with a resurgence of nationalism in Croatia, which the Yugoslav government has been attempting to counteract. The second largest of Yugoslavia's six republics—after rival Serbia—Croatia has lately been the site of a purge of nationalist-minded elements.

Even before the Bosnian events, official statements had linked last year's rise of nationalism among the peoples of Yugoslavia to political emigres.

A Communist Party-led counterattack against separatism, now underway, has resulted in a series of political trials this summer in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia.

Apparently, the overall aim is to demonstrate that

the rise of sectionalism last year was part of a large conspiracy guided from abroad. But a conclusive and dramatic link between the emigres and local students, intellectuals, lawyers, priests and others on trial has been difficult to establish.

One of the strongest indictments was against four student leaders in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. They are accused of trying to "overthrow the existing social system by means of force." All were leaders of last November's Croatian student strike. It marked the end of the Croat-rights movement in the country. The leadership was also ousted in the process.

The students' trial is to start next month. Seven other students are on trial in Zagreb now.

The Zagreb trials have been matched in Belgrade by the conviction of several persons in connection with Serbian nationalist statements. One was the head of the Serbian Republic's Lawyers' Association and another a Belgrade professor who received two-year jail sentence this week.

On the ideological front, a recently concluded meeting of the Communist Party

Presidium at Marshal Tito's retreat island of Brioni endorsed the need for more effective party work to counter both nationalism and "unitarism," synonymous in this country with Stalinism.

Since January, the top party group, the Executive Bureau, has been reshuffled and reduced in size to put it

in a stronger position to enforce party discipline.

Legislation is pending that would reduce the gap between rich and poor through tax reforms, hitting socialist fat cats. Also pending is legislation to hit at such bourgeois deviations as rampant real-estate speculation.

Religion has been under fire, too, both in the Roman Catholic north and the Orthodox south. Several priests have been arrested and charged with making nationalist statements bolstering hatreds between Catholics and Orthodox. There have been calls in the press for a struggle against the "revival of clericalism."

However, the leadership has reaffirmed the country's basic policy of political decentralization and economic liberalization.

Despite the lack of direct proof, magazine and newspaper articles have pointed

the finger at emigre organizations of the Ustashi. The Yugoslav press has strongly hinted that Australia is the base for the group mentioned in the latest announcements.

The Australian government is still awaiting information about whether any of its citizens were involved in the Bosnia episode.

About 250,000 persons of Yugoslav origin live in Australia, and last weekend a Belgrade magazine printed pictures of men wearing T-shirts lettered with "U's," for Ustashi. The pictures allegedly showed Ustashi in training in Australia.

Many Ustashi sympathizers fled to Western Europe, Australia and Latin America after the war. Some Serbs also went to Australia straight from German prison camps after the war and some of them continue to harbor resentments against the Tito regime. The Serb and Croat communities are said to have continued to live separate existences halfway around the world, with their ancient frictions.

Yugoslav officials concede that the emigre groups have had some success in instilling hatred against the Communist regime among their

children, who have little to go on except what their parents tell them.

One Yugoslav paper reported that there are about 10 groups of political emigres, with some 200,000 members, of whom 15,000 "declare themselves against today's system in Yugoslavia." The groups also try to recruit young Yugoslav workers whom the government allows to seek work in the West.

The newspaper, Nedeljne Novosti, said the largest of all the emigre groups was the Croatian Revolutionary Brethren, a society set up in Australia with branches in Europe.

Financing and support of the Ustashi exile groups is mysterious. Several Yugoslav officials have claimed that the CIA was backing the Croats without the knowledge of the U.S. government. There have also been suggestions that the Soviet Union was funding the groups through channels in West Berlin to keep the Yugoslav political pot boiling.

It seems likely, however, that at least some of the Ustashi groups are self-supporting, living off contributions and protection money extorted from vulnerable Yugoslav workers abroad.